IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant:	Roderick Malcolm Gordon Lawrie	)Examiner:
		)Unknown
PCT International		)
Application No.:	PCT/GB98/01240	)
		)
International		)
Filing Date:	29 April, 1998	) Art Unit:
		) Unknown
For:	NETWORK COMPUTER TRADING	)
	SYSTEM	)
		)

EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE

Assistant Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks
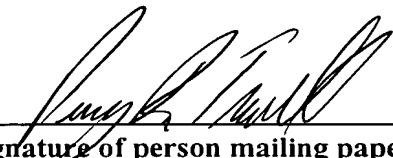Washington, D.C. 20231
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DATE OF DEPOSIT   October 28, 1999

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From the
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NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF
THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Rule 71.1)

Date of mailing (day/month/year)	1 0. 08. 99

Applicant's or agent's file reference 5246699	IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION

International application No. PCT/GB98/01240	International filing date (day/month/year) 29/04/1998	Priority date (day/month/year) 30/04/1997

Applicant
LAWRIE, Roderick, Malcolm, Gordon

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.

2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.

3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.

4. REMINDER

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices) (Article 39(1)) (see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/	Authorized officer
European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. (+49-89) 2399-0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: (+49-89) 2399-4465	Schall. H Tel.(+49-89) 2399-2647

PATENT
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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

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		)Unknown
PCT International		)
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		) Unknown
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	SYSTEM	)
		)

EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE

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Washington, D.C. 20231
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DATE OF DEPOSIT   October 28, 1999

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Penny R. Turrell
(Typed or printed name of person
mailing paper or fee)

(Signature of person mailing paper
or fee)

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 5246699	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No. PCT/GB98/01240	International filing date (day/month/year) 29/04/1998	Priority date (day/month/year) 30/04/1997

International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC G06F17/60	

Applicant LAWRIE, Roderick, Malcolm, Gordon

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 5 sheets, including this cover sheet.

    ☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

    These annexes consist of a total of 9 sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

    I   ☒   Basis of the report
    II   ☐   Priority
    III   ☐   Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
    IV   ☐   Lack of unity of invention
    V   ☒   Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations suporting such statement
    VI   ☐   Certain documents cited
    VII   ☒   Certain defects in the international application
    VIII   ☐   Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 23/11/1998	Date of completion of this report 0 5. 08. 99
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority: European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. (+49-89) 2399-0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: (+49-89) 2399-4465	Authorized officer König. W Telephone No. (+49-89) 2399 2297

I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of (*substitute sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments.*):

Description, pages:

1-31	as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-10	as received on	30/07/1999	with letter of	28/07/1999

Drawings, sheets:

1/17-17/17	as originally filed

2. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description,   pages:
- ☐ the claims,   Nos.:
- ☐ the drawings,   sheets:

3. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

4. Additional observations, if necessary:

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes:	Claims	1-10
	No:	Claims	
Inventive step (IS)	Yes:	Claims	
	No:	Claims	1-10
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes:	Claims	1-10
	No:	Claims	

2. Citations and explanations

   see separate sheet

VII. Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

   see separate sheet

Appendix to Section V

1.)   Reference is made to the following document:

D1= US 5 592 375 A (SALMON BARDWELL C ET AL) 7 January 1997

2.)   D1 relates to a computer trading system (computer-implemented system for
brokering transactions between sellers and buyers of goods or services) including
a database, a Trader's (Seller's) Interface and Buyer's Interface (see the
abstract). The computer trading system disclosed in D1 comprises a first (main)
input interface for inputting a selection of a type of commodity (figs. 3b, 4a-q, 6e,
7a-d; column 7, lines 6 to 58) and a second "commodity" interface for inputting
data (for example by clicking into the boxes 722 in fig. 7e) relating to a respective
commodity (figs. 7e-i; column 7, line 47 to column 8, line 51). Such a two stage
input interface is also disclosed in fig.3 (boxes 356 and 358).

Furthermore, D1 discloses a local or wide area network to transmit data between
a server storing the database and a Buyer's computer (one or more) (see fig.1
and column 3, line 14-27). Hence, means for receiving and transmitting data in
response to a request between a server and a user station would appear to be
implicit in D1.

3.)   The features specified in claim 1 belong to the following categories:

   (a)   computer network components: page 32, l.8 -15;
   (b)   structure of a database: page 32, l.16 - page 33, l.5;
   (c)   menu structured input forms to input data: page 33, l.6-26;
   (d)   specification of the output: page 34, l.1 - 10;
   (e)   communication link between components of (a): page 34, l.11-19.

The computer network components (a), the menu structured input forms (c), and
the communication link between computer network components (e) are already
known in the art (see D1: fig.1: server, buyer and trader stations [the three dashed
boxes]; fig.3b: "two stage" input forms [boxes 356 and 358]; fig.1 local or wide
area nework).

The structure of the database (b) is considered to reflect a simple classification of information, in particular a hierarchical classification which is already known as such for example from the table of contents of the EPC. The hierarchical classification of the data is reflected in the menu structured input forms (c).

The difference between the disclosure of D1 and the subject-matter specified in claim 1 (and similarly for claims 2 and 10) would appear to be that the computer trading system of D1 is not limited to compare prices for a specific product but refers generally to compare (review) diverse information of goods or services (for example a product) as a part of a buyer's decision making process (see D1, column 1, lines 8-38). The difference between the subject-matter specified in the independent claims and the prior art, namely to compare prices for a specific product instead of comparing diverse information of goods or services, would not appear to provide a solution to an objective technical problem. Therefore it would appear that the subject-matter specified in the independent claims 1, 2, and 10 does not provide a contribution to the prior art which would involve an inventive step in the meaning of Article 33 (3) PCT.

4.) Dependent claims 3-9 do not appear to contain any features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the requirements of the PCT in respect of inventive step.

Appendix to Section VII

5.) Contrary to the requirements of Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT, the relevant background art disclosed in the document D1 is not mentioned in the description, nor is this document identified therein.

6.) The description is not in conformity with the claims as required by Rule 5.1(a)(iii) PCT.

CLAIMS

1.   A networked trading system for enabling any of a
plurality of purchasers to purchase a predetermined
5   product selected from a plurality of products from any
of   a   plurality   of   traders   each   offering   said
predetermined product comprising:
a server station (1) for receiving and transmitting data
to and from a plurality of purchaser stations;
10   a plurality of purchaser stations (2) each having a web
browser for transmitting and receiving data to and from
said server station (1); and
data storage means (13);
characterised in that said data storage means (13) has
15   stored therein:
(a)   a database (130a-130n) arranged for storing product
data relating to said products, said product data
comprising:
(i)   product type data identifying the type of each
20   product;
(ii) attribute data (1002) identifying specific
attributes of different products within the same
product type, said attribute data providing for
each product a definition thereof which is
25   sufficiently specific for the product to be
ordered;

(iii) trader data (1004) identifying the traders offering each product; and

(iv) price data (1003) relating to the respective prices at which different traders offer said

5   predetermined product;

(b) query means (121) operable via said web browsers to execute a query for accessing said database and outputting information therefrom, said query means (121) being arranged:

10   (i) to output to the purchaser station a first purchaser interface (132) to enable a purchaser to select a product type from said plurality of product types;

(ii) to output to said purchaser station a second

15   purchaser interface (131a-131n) specific to the product type selected in the first purchaser interface, said second purchaser interface enabling a purchaser to enter text data defining specific attributes of products within said product type to

20   provide for the predetermined product a definition thereof which is sufficiently specific for the product to be ordered (133a-133n);

(iii) to perform a search to locate in said database product data having attribute data corresponding to

25   the specific attributes defined by the text data entered into said second purchaser interface; and

34

(iv) to output to said purchaser station a third
purchaser interface which:

displays in price order offers, derived from
the product data located in said search, by

5   each of a plurality of different traders to
sell   the   product   having   the   specific
definition entered via said second purchaser
interface, and

permits selection of one of said displayed
10   offers; and

(c) means, responsive to selection of one of said offers
displayed in said third purchaser interface and to said
trader data stored in said database, to establish a
communication link through said network for effecting,
15   solely   on   the   basis   of   said   specific   definition,
purchase of said predetermined product from the trader
corresponding to said selected offer or for providing
access to a website of said trader.

20   2.   A server station for use in a networked computer
trading system for enabling any of a plurality of
purchasers to purchase a predetermined product selected
from a plurality of products from any of a plurality of
traders   each   offering   said   predetermined   product
25   comprising:

means for receiving and transmitting data to and
from a plurality of purchaser stations each having a web

browser for transmitting and receiving data; and

storage means (13);

characterised by:

said storage means (13) having stored therein:

5   (a)   a database (130a-130n) arranged for storing product
data relating to said products, said product data
comprising:

(i)   product type data identifying the type of each
product;

10   (ii) attribute data (1002) identifying specific
attributes of different products within the same
product type, said attribute data providing for
each product a definition thereof which is
sufficiently specific for the product to be
15   ordered;

(iii) trader data (1004) identifying the traders
offering each product; and

(iv) price data (1003) relating to the respective
prices at which different traders offer said
20   predetermined product;

(b)   query means (121) operable via said web browsers
to execute a query for accessing said database and
outputting information therefrom, said query means (121)
being arranged:

25   (i)   to output to a purchaser station a first
purchaser interface (132) to enable a purchaser to
select a product type from said plurality of product

types;

(ii) to output to a purchaser station a second purchaser interface (131a-131n) specific to the product type selected in the first purchaser interface, said second purchaser interface enabling a purchaser to enter text data defining specific attributes of products within said product type to provide for the predetermined product a definition thereof which is sufficiently specific for the product to be ordered (133a-133n);

(iii) to perform a search to locate in said database product data having attribute data corresponding to the specific attributes defined by the text data entered into said second purchaser interface; and

(iv) to output to a purchaser station a third purchaser interface which:

    displays in price order offers, derived from the product data located in said search, by each of a plurality of different traders to sell the product having the specific definition entered via said second purchaser interface, and

    permits selection of one of said displayed offers; and

(c) means, responsive to selection of one of said offers displayed in said third purchaser interface and to said trader data stored in said database, to establish a

communication link through said network for effecting, solely on the basis of said specific definition, purchase of said predetermined product from the trader corresponding to said selected offer or for providing

5   access to a website of said trader.

3.   An apparatus in accordance with claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said storage means (13) has stored therein product data relating to products.

10

4.   An apparatus in accordance with any preceding claim, further comprising means (123) for recording the number of particular times price data is accessed from said database.

15

5.   An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said means (123) for recording a number of times entries are retrieved from said database is arranged to record the cumulative value of the price data retrieved.

20

6.   An apparatus in accordance with claim 4 or claim 5, further comprising output means (124) for outputting said recorded data.

25   7.   An apparatus in accordance with any preceding claim, wherein said server station (1) is arranged to receive data representative of records which are to be stored in

said database.

8.   An apparatus according to any preceding claim,
further comprising input means for inputting data for
5   storage in said database.

9.   A networked computer trading system comprising
server station in accordance with any of claims 2 to 8
when dependent directly or indirectly upon claim 2 and
10   a plurality of purchaser stations and a plurality of
trader stations, wherein said plurality of purchaser
stations and said plurality of trader stations are
arranged to receive and transmit data to and from said
central server station.

15

10. A storage medium having recorded thereon means for
generating
(a) a database (130a-130n) arranged for storing product
data relating to said products, said product data
20   comprising:

     (i) product type data identifying the type of each
     product;

     (ii) attribute data (1002) identifying specific
     attributes of different products within the same
25   product type, said attribute data providing for
     each product a definition thereof which is
     sufficiently specific for the product to be

ordered;

(iii) trader data (1004) identifying the traders
offering each product; and

(iv) price data (1003) relating to the respective

5   prices at which different traders offer said
predetermined product;

(b) query means (121) operable via said web browsers
to execute a query for accessing said database and
outputting information therefrom, said query means (121)

10   being arranged:

(i) to output to the purchaser station a first
purchaser interface (132) to enable a purchaser to
select a product type from said plurality of product
types;

15   (ii) to output to said purchaser station a second
purchaser interface (131a-131n) specific to the
product type selected in the first purchaser
interface, said second purchaser interface enabling
a purchaser to enter text data defining specific

20   attributes of products within said product type
selected in the first purchaser interface, said
second purchaser interface enabling a purchaser to
enter text data defining specific attributes of
products within said product type to provide for

25   the predetermined product a definition thereof
which is sufficiently specific for the product to
be ordered (133a-133n);

(iii) to perform a search to locate in said database product data having attribute data corresponding to the specific attributes defined by the text data entered into said second purchaser interface; and

5   (iv) to output to said purchaser station a third purchaser interface which:

> displays in price order offers, derived from the product data located in said search, by each of a plurality of different traders to
>
> 10   sell the product having the specific definition entered via said second purchaser interface, and
>
> permits selection of one of said displayed offers; and

15 (c) means, responsive to selection of one of said offers displayed in said third purchaser interface and to said trader-data stored in said database, to establish a communication link through said network for effecting, solely on the basis of said specific definition,

20 purchase of said predetermined product from the trader corresponding to said selected offer or for providing access to a website of said trader.